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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION US-TAIWAN RELATIONS - TOKYO

LEAD STORIES: Most Friday morning papers front-paged PM Koizumi's meeting Thursday evening with Okinawa Gov. Inamine, at which Koizumi promised that the GOJ would faithfully respond to Inamine's requests for economic measures for the island prefecture in exchange for accepting a series of US base realignment programs.

1. "US Refusal of Transit Stay for Taiwanese President Chen Deepening Washington-Taipei Gulf" Taipei correspondent Ishii of the top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri commented (5/12): "The gulf between the US and Taiwan is deepening following the US refusal to allow Taiwanese President Chen to stay in the country while in transit to two Latin American nations. Taipei turned down Washington's suggestion that Chen's airplane could refuel in Anchorage on his way to Latin America and back. As a result, he made his first-ever visit to Libya, a country with which Taiwan has no diplomatic relations. Chen is scheduled to return to Taipei Friday.

2. "During his five previous visits to Latin America, the US allowed Chen to stay during transit. An aide close to Chen expressed displeasure, saying: 'While the US rolled out the welcome mat for Hu Jintao, the head of a one-party dictatorship, it would only allow the leader of democratic Taiwan to refuel. The Taiwanese people cannot accept this.' The US and Taiwan are in agreement on the importance of security cooperation to counter China, which is undertaking a military buildup. A spokesman for Taiwan's Foreign Ministry said Thursday that the visit to Latin America was the primary purpose of Chen's trip and that the request for a transit stay was a secondary matter, trying desperately to downplay suggestions that relations with Washington were suffering."

